Alberta
FIRE NEWS
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Fire Services Advisory Committee update

FSAC moving forward with new members, working groups

The Alberta Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) is adding new members to provide the committee with greater representation from Alberta's municipalities.

Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Renner authorized the expansion of the committee to add representatives from Alberta's two municipal associations, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C), as voting members.

These changes stem from a series of workshops held by FSAC across the province in late 2005. The workshops featured high levels of participation from a broad range of fire service stakeholders from across the province including career and volunteer fire departments, municipal administration, industry, First Nations and provincial and federal government departments.

Feedback from these sessions was positive, with participants expressing support for the committee's initial concepts for a unifying fire service framework which would include:

- the development of a community-based, all-hazards risk assessment and management system;
- multi-tiered standards for training, equipment and apparatus that recognize the differences between large, career and small volunteer fire services; and,
- the creation of a committee, representative of all fire service stakeholders, to oversee and maintain the framework.

Participants also emphasized the need for increased involvement in the committee by municipal government officials. A report on these workshops, including recommendations for broadening FSAC's membership to include a representative from each of the AUMA and AAMD&C, was submitted to Minister Renner in March 2006.

In addition to approving the additions to the committee membership, Renner also authorized the creation of technical working groups to further develop the concepts for a unifying fire service framework. These FSAC working groups began developing detailed plans and proposals in July 2006 in the areas of:

- risk management and community capacity;
- skills, competency and leadership for the fire services;
- technical standards; and
- public education and prevention.

Once the four working groups have developed their strategic plans, further stakeholder input will be invited.

The FSAC website is the gateway to information on the committee: their work, the members and any upcoming events. The website also provides access to FSAC publications and provides information about workshop or consultation sessions affecting fire services stakeholders in Alberta. Visit www.fsacalberta.ca.

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fire etc. update

A spray of water marks the official unveiling of two new fire trucks for the fleet of training apparatus at Lakeland College's ***fire etc.***

fire etc. update

A spray of water marks the official unveiling of two new fire trucks for the fleet of training apparatus at Lakeland College's ***fire etc.*** *See story on page 8.*

Alberta

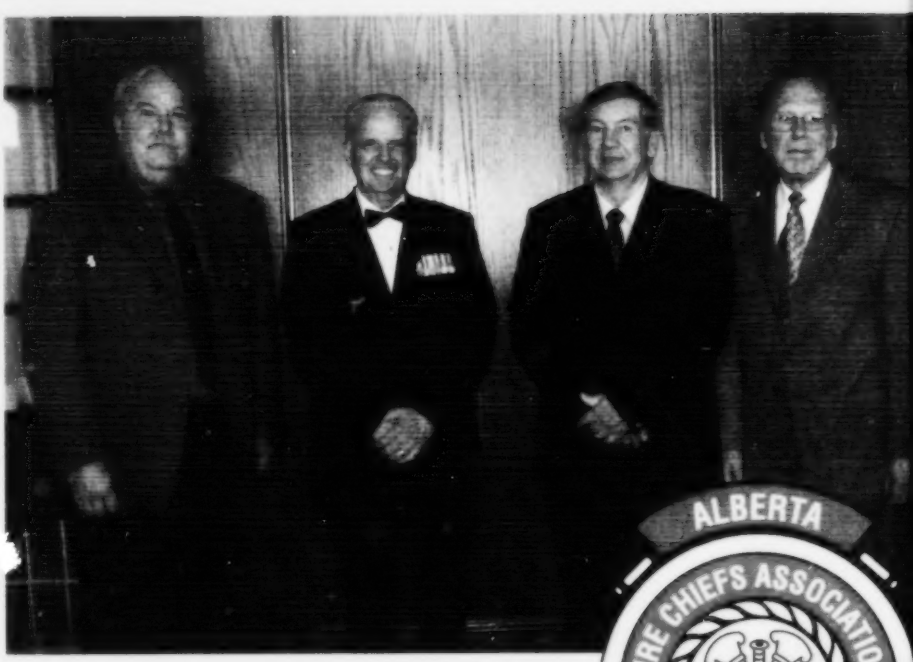
Fire safety survey | Tank program | Pandemic planning | Prevention education | And more – see inside!

Continuing the tradition

The 59th Annual Conference of the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) turned out to be a spectacular event. The conference, held June 18-20 at the Capri Hotel in Red Deer, provided a mix of education and camaraderie for fire service personnel from across Alberta.

As part of the traditional western barbeque, this year's conference delegates watched Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final on two large screens. Although the game result wasn't what Albertans wanted, the conference itself provided important updates on a number of issues in the fire service as well as opportunities for sharing fire knowledge and expertise among colleagues. In addition to a strong lineup of lectures – including Northwest Territories Fire Marshall Bernie Van Tighem's overview of the Yellowknife situation; Ontario Fire Marshall's Office member Chris Williams' summary of recent tragic fires in Ontario and the steps taken by the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office to enhance fire prevention awareness and safety; and Gene Carlson's perspective on safety for emergency responders when working on highways – the conference also included a dialogue between AFCA President Brian McEvoy and Alberta Municipal Affairs Assistant Deputy Minister Ivan Moore.

With 98 booths and an additional 36 outdoor displays, delegates also got the opportunity to explore new equipment, services and products relevant to the fire service. An added bonus to this year's conference was the free cholesterol and blood pressure screening provided by four firefighters from the Fort McMurray Fire Department.



Four "generations" of Alberta Fire Commissioners – Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample and former Fire Commissioners Pat Graham, Tom Makey and Bill MacKay – were united at the AFCA conference.

Raising $$$ for a good cause

Thanks to the stupendous efforts of Mundare Fire Chief Glenda Dales, Region 3 Director of the AFCA Board, $2,216 was raised for the Edmonton Burn Rehabilitation Unit through a silent auction, for a donated Edmonton Oilers hockey jersey and a raffle draw for a choice of a handmade quilt or framed original piece of artwork.

Saying thanks to AFCA sponsors and exhibitors

Sponsors and exhibitors are a big part of the AFCA conference. In addition to the many companies that participated as exhibitors at this year's conference, thanks also go out to the following corporate sponsors:

Platinum – E-One Inc., Rocky Mountain Phoenix, ARC Business Solutions Inc.
Gold – ATCO Gas, American LaFrance
Silver – FDM Software Ltd., **fire etc.**
Bronze – Mega-Technical Holdings Ltd., Pyrene Corporation, Eveready Emergency Response

AFCA 2006 resolutions

During the Annual General Meeting that took place at the conference, three resolutions were put forth, as indicated below. Two were approved and one was defeated.

Resolution # 1

Moved by Glenda Dales on behalf of Region 3 that the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs requesting that storage, possession, sale and discharge of low hazard fireworks listed in Class 7, Division 2, Subdivision 1 of the *Explosives Act* (Canada) and regulations under that act be prohibited by the Alberta Fire Code when it is updated in 2007. Seconded by Roland Haligan.

Opportunity was provided to speak in favour or against the resolution. Motion carried.

2008-03243/

Resolution # 2

Moved by Glenda Dales on behalf of Region 3 that the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association send a letter to the Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister, Industry Canada, strongly recommending that Industry Canada discontinue its attempt to force Canadian fire departments to abandon their 150 MHz bandwidths. Identifying concerns over the costs involved, the limited proposed transition period, and the concern for the potential increased risks to firefighters, increased potential losses and, ultimately, the safety of those who we are trying to help. Seconded by Andy VanRyan.

Opportunity was provided to speak in favour or against the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution # 3

Moved by Glenda Dales on behalf of Region 3 that the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association request that **fire etc.** review their processes and identify inconsistencies in delivery of services to Municipal Fire Services, such as marking and certificates, and work to resolve them. **fire etc.** is requested to provide and present a report to the AFCA Board of Directors on solutions identified in the review before the end of 2006 after which the report is to be posted on the AFCA website. Seconded by Bart Clark.

Opportunity was provided to speak in favour or against the resolution. Motion defeated.

A further discussion with respect to **fire etc.**/Lakeland College took place. Moved by Mac deBeaudrap that the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association form a sub committee to look at all matters pertaining to services from **fire etc.**/ Lakeland College. Seconded by Wilfred Neat. Motion carried. A sub committee of the following was created: Les Mroz – Chair; Brian Ballard; Cammie Laird and Kevin LeBlanc.

AFCA member benefits

If you're not already a member of the AFCA, consider joining now. In addition to reduced rates for the annual conference, members also receive discounts on all training and educational material from the AFCA Bookstore. Members are also invited to attend regional meetings that take place around the province and to get involved in important issues that affect the fire service. For more details and a registration form, visit the AFCA website at www.afca.ab.ca

Mark your calendar

Be sure to mark your calendar to attend the 2007 AFCA conference at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton from June 10-13, 2007. As this will be the 60th Annual Conference, plans are in the works to make it a spectacular event that you won't want to miss!

Canada Safety Council/Duracell Fire Safety Survey results

Home fire safety not a top priority: study

According to a recent survey commissioned by the Canada Safety Council and Duracell, Albertans have some homework to do when it comes to fire safety.

In addition to having the oldest fire alarms, Alberta residents are the most guilty of not testing their fire alarms (overall, eight per cent of Canadians have never tested their fire alarms, while that number rises to 13 per cent for Albertans).

The good news is that 86 per cent of Canadians have fire alarms installed in the correct areas of their homes, outside the bedrooms. However, six per cent of Alberta residents and five per cent of B.C. residents don't have fire alarms. While 25 per cent of Canadians have removed the batteries from their alarms for a reason other than to replace older batteries, this number rises to 31 per cent for Albertans. Slightly more women than men have removed the batteries to silence the alarm (26 per cent versus 23 per cent), while Canadians under 30 are more likely than those aged 30 and older to have removed batteries to silence the alarm or to use them in other electronic devices.

Other interesting statistics from the survey include:

- Fire safety planning was slightly more common among men than women (31 per cent versus 28 per cent).
- 70 per cent of Canadians have never practiced a fire drill over the past year (which is an improvement over the previous year's 78 per cent).
- 69 per cent of Canadians admitted that they haven't developed a home fire escape plan.
- While one in five Canadians plan for safety when it comes to barbecueing (which is more than any other summer activity) this is still dangerously low.
- Only three per cent said they safely prepare for using fireworks.
- Camping, biking and swimming all tied for the second most common activity that prompts Canadians to think safety first.

The survey was conducted by Maritz Research, an independent non-partisan research firm, on April 13-22, 2006, across Canada by telephone using a representative sample of 1,000 Canadians 18 years and older.

To view the original survey summary documents from which this article was prepared, visit the FCO website under the "Canada Safety Council – Duracell Fire Safety Study – 2006" link in the "Statistics Reports" section.

Preliminary results from the smoke alarm survey in Wainwright

During May 2006, the Wainwright Fire and Rescue Department, under the leadership of Fire Chief David Zayonce, was busy conducting a smoke alarm survey in the Town of Wainwright. The survey was developed by the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) to increase understanding of the barriers to smoke alarm installation and maintenance in rural Alberta communities. Historically, communities in rural Alberta have a higher risk of fires, fire deaths and fire injuries, as well as lower rates of smoke alarm installation and maintenance.

Most fire prevention and safety interventions are driven by fire statistics based on past fire incidents. Although this approach can provide useful guidance, fire statistics alone cannot reveal human behaviours related to fire prevention, early detection and survival. Behaviours are linked to intentions, which in turn are linked to beliefs. In order to understand these beliefs, the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a theory in social psychology, were incorporated into the survey. The theory states the best predictor of a behaviour is the intention to carry out an action. The TPB proposes that there are three factors that lead to the formation of a behavioural intention: a positive attitude, a supportive subjective norm and a perception of behavioural control. This theory has received considerable support in many studies to understand and change a wide range of behaviours.

Two survey questionnaires were developed, one each for homes with at least one smoke alarm and for homes with no smoke alarms. Of the 36 homes surveyed at random, there was only one home without a smoke alarm. The analysis of survey responses was therefore focused on the 35 homes with smoke alarms.

Wainwright resident Jim Postons (middle) answers a survey conducted by firefighter Steve Pioker (left) and Captain Randy Mierow (right)

A detailed report which includes a review of fire statistics in Alberta, the US and the UK, relevant smoke alarm literature, the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the PRECEDE-PROCEED Model, the questionnaire, survey responses, discussion and conclusions, including a list of references, is posted on the FCO website under the link "Statistics Reports." A summary of key findings and some potential applications is as follows.

Both positive and negative behaviours in relation to home fire safety and specifically to smoke alarms were evident from the survey responses.

Positives

Ninety-four per cent of the respondents reported that their smoke alarms were in working condition. This is very high compared to the 25 per cent activation of smoke alarms in rural homes that have experienced fires. The recommended annual battery replacement was followed by 70 per cent of the respondents with battery powered smoke alarms.

Only nine per cent of survey respondents removed the smoke alarm battery during a false alarm. The majority fanned smoke/fumes/steam away from the smoke alarms.

The respondents ranked "having and maintaining smoke alarms" high on a seven-point scale under the attitude, behavioural beliefs and motivation to comply constructs.

Negatives

Twenty-six per cent of respondents indicated that they never test their smoke alarms. Only nine per cent tested their smoke alarms once a month as recommended. Several factors may explain these findings. First, a lack of knowledge of why smoke alarms must be tested at all and why once a month testing is recommended. This finding points to the need for revision of current fire safety messaging to include a simple explanation of how smoke alarms fail with age. Second, the responses indicate that testing can easily be forgotten or may be hindered by competing demands on time. Manufacturers may address this difficulty by developing smoke alarms with "self-testing" capability.

Waingwright Fire Chief David Zayonce was instrumental in conducting the survey.

In the mean time, education programs can suggest novel ways in which people can ensure this task is not forgotten. Also, promotion of the 10-year lithium battery powered smoke alarms may be a valid solution for the 30 per cent of respondents who selected battery replacement at intervals longer than one year or "never."

The most significant negative finding was 78 per cent of respondents have never planned and practiced a fire drill. Nearly 50 per cent of these respondents "never thought about it," while another 25 per cent "have thought about it, but it's a low priority." These results are similar to findings reported from a recent Canada-wide survey conducted by Maritz Research. It appears that knowledge of fire growth rates, toxic gases and other effects of fires and the corresponding need for fire drills are not well understood by the respondents and the public in general.

Fire risk at home was rated as "low" (69 per cent) and as "no risk" by another six per cent. This finding comes as no surprise. The very low incidence of home fires in the Town of Wainwright may have contributed to the perception of low risk. The consequences of this perception may translate to the significant lack of fire drills and smoke alarm testing as well as the high likelihood of forgetting to test smoke alarms. A disadvantage of this perception of low risk is that these respondents may not be receptive to fire safety messages. Again, the public fire educator must use creative ways to inform the public of the fire hazards that one deals with on a daily basis and how these hazards can be released (start a fire) when the "controls" fail.

The respondents acknowledged their local fire department as a source of support and advice and indicated a moderately high motivation to comply with the fire department and the wishes of others living in the home with regard to smoke alarm testing. The sources of fire safety information were ranked from high to low – newspapers (66 per cent); radio/TV (60 per cent); fire department (57 per cent); children (information brought from school – 42 per cent); friends (28 per cent). This points to a range of the avenues to increase awareness of fire safety in Wainwright and the special role the fire department can play in keeping its community well informed.

Enabling and reinforcing factors, especially an economic incentive from fire insurance and more support from the local fire department, were rated as motivators to maintain smoke alarms. It appears that the Wainwright fire department is a credible community agency in the eyes of the respondents.

The results based on the survey responses can only be considered preliminary due to the small sample size. Furthermore, the recommended methodology for TPB-based studies requires an elicitation study to refine the preliminary questionnaire. This step, although not carried out due to time limitations, will be completed in the fall to develop a finalized survey for large scale application and more refined data analysis to define beliefs and constraints, an understanding of which can lead to effective interventions using social marketing approaches.

This report represents the first of a series of reports based on the survey tool that will be refined and applied in other communities interested in conducting such studies with the assistance of the FCO. It is expected that the results will vary depending on the community surveyed. It appears that the Town of Wainwright may not be representative of a typical rural community in Alberta.

Conclusion

The three steps in a home fire safety scheme are fire prevention, early detection of smoke/fire danger with smoke alarms and practice of fire drills to train occupants to evacuate safely in case of a future fire emergency. Fire statistics in Alberta and the United States indicate that one of the key deficiencies in the fire safety scheme, especially in rural homes, is the lack of installation and maintenance of smoke alarms in working condition.

Homes represent a unique environment where safety is in the hands of the occupants and safety practices are not under any surveillance as in an efficiently run industrial setting. The low score given for home fire risk, indicative of the perception of the respondents in this survey, may reflect the reality of the declining frequency of fires in the province and the random nature of the distribution of home fires. Yet fire hazards exist in all homes, dependent on the right combination of causal factors for their release. It is in such circumstances that smoke alarms and fire drills serve their purpose. However, the intended safety benefits of smoke alarms derive from the active participation of responsible adults in the form of monthly testing and annual replacement of batteries. The difficulty lies in getting people to carry out "active" steps that are potentially beneficial to them. The potential of the TPB to predict intentions, understand beliefs and who influences beliefs, and what factors are perceived as easy or difficult in performing the desired behaviours, holds considerable promise in guiding effective smoke alarm interventions in the future.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Celine Farley, Coordonnatrice à la formation, INSPQ, Montreal (Quebec) for her guidance and advice throughout the study; David Zayonce, Fire Chief of the Town of Wainwright and his staff of volunteer firefighters who conducted the survey; and Dr. Peter Rothe at the University of Alberta for helpful suggestions during questionnaire construction.

For further information on the survey, please contact Mahendra Wijayasinghe, PhD, Assistant Fire Commissioner (Research & Programs) at (780) 415-0546 or email mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca

Métis fire training

Two more students join training program

This summer, two Métis firefighters passed the NFPA 1001 theory threshold exam and underwent training with the City of Edmonton Fire and Rescue.

Perry Cornish graduated from Grande Prairie Composite High School in 2003 and entered the workforce as a shipper/receiver, eventually moving up to partsman. However, his goal is to be a career fire fighter either in the Grande Prairie or Edmonton area, a goal he hopes his NFPA training will enable him to achieve. "I'm very impressed with the instruction and hands-on learning I have received," said Cornish.

Dave Jensen has been a member of the Edson volunteer fire department for two years. For him, firefighting is in his blood; both Jensen's father and uncle are retired City of Edmonton firefighters. Based on feedback from his training officers, Jensen is well on his way to continuing the tradition in his family.

"Both Perry Cornish and Dave Jensen are very humble men who are pillars in their community and great family men," said Training Officer Douglas Grant. "Both men impressed me in the areas of attitude, effort, integrity and teamwork."

Métis firefighters Dave Jensen (back row, third from left) from Beaverlodge and Perry Cornish (middle row, second from right) from Grande Prairie recently undertook NFPA 1001 training with the City of Edmonton Fire and Rescue.

Métis Employment Program

Cornish and Jensen were able to participate in training with the City of Edmonton Fire and Rescue Department through the Métis Employment Program. The Métis Nations of Alberta has funding available for Métis individuals to take employment training. To receive funding, training courses must satisfy the following criteria:

- The training must be less than 52 weeks in length
- The training must be certified and result in employment self-sufficiency.

For more information on the Métis Employment Program, visit www.albertametis.com or call the Métis Nation of Alberta at (800)252-7553.

Underground petroleum storage

$50 million provided for tank site remediation

Municipalities and owners of small retail gas stations with potential contamination from underground petroleum storage tanks may be eligible for funding under a remediation program. The provincial government has approved $50 million for the program. Eligible sites must have a tank that was installed prior to the Alberta Fire Code amendments of September 1, 1992. Small operations are those owners with five or fewer retail fuel sites.

"The new tank site remediation program continues the work of a previous program to help eligible municipalities and owners of small retail gas stations identify and take necessary action to address contamination at underground fuel tank sites," said Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs. "The priority is to help complete the remediation of eligible sites from the previous program."

Participants from the first program whose sites were found to be heavily contaminated, and whose remediation costs exceed the initial base grant of $110,000, may be eligible for up to an additional $50,000 per site to help complete remediation. In addition, site owners who paid more than the original grant funding limit to complete remediation may be reimbursed, up to the same additional amount. This will address an estimated 300 tank sites in the province. Participants from the first program who may be eligible for additional funding will be notified of the new program directly by mail.

Applications will also be available for new participants to the program. This includes municipalities and owners of small retail gas stations that meet the eligibility criteria of the previous program. This will address an estimated 300 new tank sites. Those who are not eligible for the program include sites that have been out-of-service for more than two years and do not pose a significant environmental risk, large retailers, and non-retail operations.

Application forms will be available September 15, and new site applications will be processed in the order they are received. Program information is available on the Municipal Affairs website at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca. If municipalities and site owners require more information, they can call 1-866-833-3300.

In the first program, which was launched in 2000, $60 million was committed to help remediate the sites of 930 applicants, including 66 municipalities. The Alberta Fire Code requires that all underground fuel tanks be upgraded to specified standards. The *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* requires owners of contaminated properties to clean them up to established environmental standards.

Fishing Lake Fire Department profile

Aboriginal fire department keeps very busy

The small town of Fishing Lake, in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake area, possesses a dynamic fire department. The village formed the department in 1992 and built its fire hall that same year. In 2004, the town put on an addition which included two more bays, bringing the total to five.

There are 10 employees, including nine volunteers, and each member is encouraged to achieve the full 1001 status.

The department is responsible for four townships, which cover a total of 373 square kilometres. To carry out the duties of this large area, the fire hall has one pumper truck, a tanker, a rescue unit, a grass truck and a medical response unit. The department deals with 15 to 20 fires a year, with most of the work coming from first response calls. Grass fires make up the majority of the alarms, along with structural fires and dangerous goods incidents.

Training is a fundamental part of the Fishing Lake Fire Department, with an emphasis on community skills. While Dangerous Goods Training is done in-house, firefighters do not receive special instruction concerning wildland fires. "This type of fire occurs frequently, but the knowledge of how to fight them resides in the community," said Fire Chief Leon Cardinal. "Everyone knows what to do and the job is done."

Another priority for the department is community fire prevention outreach programs. "Our fire department personnel visit the elementary schools three or four times a year," said Cardinal. "Starting this fall, our department will be including the 'Getting to Know Fire' syllabus in the school visits."

The Fishing Lake Fire Department also has an active special programs curriculum, including extrication programs, in-house first aid training and WHMIS education. Instructors for the first aid courses come from within the department, as several trained people are on staff.

"All of these activities keep our firefighters quite busy. Beyond responding to calls, the additional training and involvement in the community results in a strong awareness about fire prevention and safety in Fishing Lake," said Cardinal.

Upcoming public fire education campaigns

Fire prevention and safety awareness

Every year, the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) supports a number of public fire education campaigns and provides resources to assist fire and safety organizations in promoting fire prevention and safety in their communities. The upcoming campaigns and their support documents are listed below.

Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week takes place October 8-14, 2006 , to remind Albertans about fire prevention and safety. This year's theme is "Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat." Several resources are currently available from the FCO to assist your Fire Prevention Week activities and events.

The Fire Prevention Week campaign kit provides a series of articles on the theme and other fire prevention and safety issues to keep Albertans safe from fire. The kit will be available on the FCO's website in September.

The Children's Program provides free fire safety activity booklets to children in Grades K-3, compliments of ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric in partnership with the FCO. The program also includes Fire Chief For a Day contest materials for participating fire departments and a chance to win a home computer system.

Change your clock, change your smoke alarm batteries

Smoke alarm batteries need to be changed at least once a year. An easy way to remind Albertans to change the batteries in their smoke alarms is to encourage them to make the change when clocks are changed back to Standard Time on October 29. The FCO will release an information bulletin a few days before this date to remind the public.

December holiday fire safety

During the winter holiday season (December 15-31), the rate of home fires, fire deaths, fire injuries and property losses increase substantially compared with the rest of the year. In order to promote greater awareness and increased fire prevention and safety during this holiday season, the FCO will publish a holiday fire safety campaign kit on its website. The kit will available at the beginning of December 2006.

The above resources will be available on the FCO website under "campaigns."

For more information or for hard copies of these materials, please contact Te-Jay Thompson at 780 644-4692 or e-mail te-jay.thompson@gov.ab.ca.

Champagne celebration for truck christening

A spray of champagne over the front grille marked the official unveiling of two new fire trucks to the fleet of training apparatus at Lakeland College's **fire etc.** on June 30, 2006. Ivan Moore, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs and Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample christened the two new fire trucks to the fleet at **fire etc.** at a ceremonial march-in by emergency services Technician (EST) students for an audience of dignitaries, staff and students. Chris Senaratne, Dean of **fire etc.**, noted that the two new trucks add to the quality of training provided to students. "Not only do these apparatus have the most recent technology, we now have 14 trucks in our fleet."

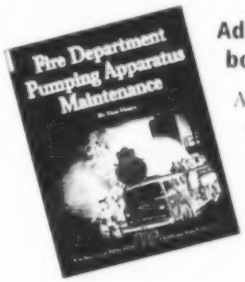
The trucks were built by Pierce Manufacturing in Florida, the first company to be certified to build to the high ULC S-515 standard required by Canadian fire services.

*Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample prepares to christen one of the two new fire additions to the **fire etc.** truck fleet.*

Rope rescue courses continues

Calling all technicians: the Rescue Awareness and Rope Rescue technician courses scheduled for **fire etc.** continue through the fall. The 40-hour courses, which were initially offered in July, are now slated for early September and late October at Firemaster in Red Deer. Both locations are fully equipped to simulate any rope rescue scenario whether indoors or out, industrial or wilderness.

Accredited through IFSAC and ProBoard, this program is ideal for the professional rescuer who wishes to learn skills and techniques that are based on the strict guidelines of the NFPA 1006 standard. The rescue awareness course is a prerequisite for the rope rescue technician course. Both courses require EMR training. To register, call 1-800-661-6490 ext. 8633.



Add this to your department bookshelf

A maintenance manual may be the next best thing to learning at a pumping apparatus course, and your department can get its copy through the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association.

Don Henry, mechanics instructor at Lakeland College, wrote the *Fire Department Pumping Apparatus Maintenance Manual*. In addition to mechanics, he also teaches basic and advanced fire apparatus maintenance courses for **fire etc.** "The manual is part of the course, but certainly can be purchased as a reference book," said Henry.

Henry has been gratified by the response to his manual. U.S. Homeland Security even requires it as part of the recommended standard for fire services seeking its grants.

The first edition of the manual came out in 2003 and Henry has donated all the royalties to Lakeland College. To get your copy, go to **www.afca.ab.ca/AFCAStore**.

Health & Safety for Firefighters

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) is continuing its work assisting fire departments in complying with the requirements of Alberta's Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) code. Seminars are being conducted across the province for municipal officials, including mayors, reeves and councils, and front-line firefighters. These seminars touch on key planning points that fire departments should be considering when preparing their health and safety program. To date, more than 60 presentations have been made.

In addition to these presentations, work is progressing on the development of sample template guiding documents. These documents include:

- Standard Operating Guidelines/ Procedures;
- Health and Safety policies;
- Level of Service policy statements;
- Template bylaws and agreements; and
- Planning process, including critical steps.

The FCO is also working with **fire etc.** to develop a series of seminars to assist with training safety officers, fire chiefs and firefighters in fulfilling their responsibilities under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*. The first seminar to assist the fire service in developing health and safety programs is now being developed for delivery in Fall 2006. The seminar will be delivered in locations across Alberta to ensure everyone who requires the seminar will be able to attend. Stay tuned for further information.

The FCO remains available to assist fire departments and municipalities in developing their safety programs. Contact your Fire Safety Officer directly or contact the FCO at (780) 427-8392 (toll free: 310-0000).

"A Fire Within" calendar update

Profiling volunteer firefighters

Several issues ago, we told you about the efforts of an Alberta firefighter to create a calendar that focused on volunteer firefighters. What started from a motorist's casual remark during a roadblock on Highway 22 as firefighters attended to the scene of a collision has now expanded into a much more comprehensive, and much sought after product.

Chad Sartison, a volunteer firefighter from Longview, and photographer Charles Hope created the "A Fire Within" calendar as a pictorial tribute to Alberta's volunteer firefighters. Now in its third year, "A Fire Within" has expanded to include central Alberta volunteer fire departments. Thanks to the efforts of Kerin Sparks, Manager of the Fire Services Market Canada to secure a donation of a $10,000 thermal imaging camera, there is an added incentive for fire departments participating in the 2007 calendar. The fire department that generates the most sales (proportional to their population) will be awarded the camera.

In March 2006, Sartison sent out 150 invitations to volunteer fire departments, asking those interested in participating in the 2007 calendar to contact him. He was overwhelmed by the response and now has a long waiting list.

"To ensure that the calendar is a success each year, we need to pick fire departments that are willing to actively participate and sell the calendars," he said.

Each calendar sells for $20, with $12 of that going to the selling fire departments. The participating fire departments are free to use the dollars as they wish said Sartison. "The money often serves to bridge the gap between fire department needs and wants and what funding is available from the municipalities."

In addition to providing funding to help fire departments obtain equipment, Sartison says the real thrill is in ensuring that volunteer firefighters have accessible dollars to access training grants and receive additional training. "To me, training is actually more important than equipment," said Sartison. "Knowing that the profits from these calendars are helping firefighters get the training they want and need is a truly great motivator."

And then there are examples of the calendar having a very direct impact on the lives of people in communities where they are sold.

Chad Sartison, a volunteer firefighter from Longview, created the "A Fire Within" calendar as a pictorial tribute to Alberta's volunteer firefighters.

"Last year, the Canmore Fire Department sold over 1,000 calendars, which meant that they received $12,000. This money was used to purchase a remote rescue vehicle for firefighters to go on the back country trails to rescue hurt or stranded hikers. One of those hikers rescued with the vehicle was a lady who had bought a calendar three months prior. This was a definite example of all the hard work making a difference," said Sartison.

The calendar's success is also translating into increasing interest from the public and industry. Sartison is currently in discussion with a potential sponsor that would help increase the production of the calendars, and there are plans to expand the initiative into British Columbia.

For information about the calendars and how to get involved in future editions, visit www.thefirewithin.ca or contact Chad Sartison at (403) 809-8187.

The Fire & Injury Prevention Educators' Network (FIPEN) of Alberta

Injuries from various hazards including fires and burns are unacceptably high in Alberta. Injuries are the leading cause of death for Albertans aged one to 44 years and the greatest killer of our children. On average, 6,300 fires in Alberta claim the lives of 35 people, injure another 380 and cause more than $190 million in property losses each year.

Fire/emergency services, the first responders to fires and injuries, have recognized the value of education in minimizing these preventable incidents in the communities they serve.

An educational gap exists with regard to fire and injury prevention in this province.

Children growing up in Alberta are not consistently exposed to life-saving fire and injury prevention lessons, either through the school system, fire/emergency services programs or other sources. The same is true for seniors, the disabled, Aboriginals, immigrants, building owners/operators, etc. An educational gap exists with regard to fire and injury prevention in this province. There is a need for a province-wide focus on fire and injury prevention education, which can translate into safe attitudes and behaviours in all Albertans, leading to a safer Alberta.

The Fire & Injury Prevention Educators' Network (FIPEN) was formed to provide leadership and assume responsibility for developing and implementing a strategic plan that will address the issue of fire and injury prevention in Alberta. The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), with direction from the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR), initiated and facilitated the establishment of FIPEN in the spring of 2005. FIPEN currently consists of an advisory committee and a steering committee.

The advisory committee is made up of representatives from eight provincial government ministries and representatives from Health Canada, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, the Alberta Firefighters Association, the Alberta Ambulance Operators' Association, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, the Safety Codes Council and the ACICR.

The steering committee is comprised of representatives from the fire service, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, the Alberta Firefighters Association, the FCO, the ACICR, as well as an educator and an RCMP officer. The committee meets quarterly to discuss and develop a strategy to enhance fire and injury prevention education in Alberta.

FIPEN's steering committee is currently developing strategic goals that will be translated into specific objectives and action plans. Establishing a province-wide group of educators to deliver consistent and quality fire and injury prevention programs at the community level is the next critical step for FIPEN. It is anticipated that this network of educators will be formed in 2007.

FIPEN updates ...

To access all FIPEN meeting minutes and related documents please visit the FCO website and click on the Fire & Injury Prevention Educators' Network link.

For further information on FIPEN, contact the FIPEN Steering Committee co-chairs:

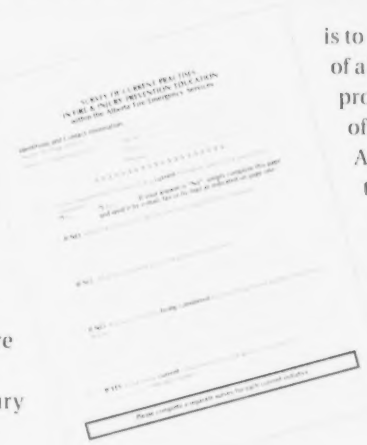
- **Assistant Fire Commissioner**
  mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca
  Phone: (780) 415-0546 or
- **Assistant Fire Marshal**
  tim.vandenbrink@edmonton.ca
  Phone: (780) 496-3856.

FIPEN: What's in it for you?

- A forum for better networking and ideas.
- There are many creative minds in our province that have developed new techniques for program delivery in fire and injury prevention education. FIPEN will identify these and disseminate them for the benefit of all educators in the province.
- Opportunities for training to become competent educators.
- Resource materials of high quality with consistent, technically accurate messages for use throughout the province.
- Corporate funding to support educational efforts.
- Support to educators includes:
  - a website;
  - workshops and an annual conference;
  - reasonably-priced materials; and
  - teaching aids for your programs.

Exploring current practices in fire and injury prevention education

Alberta fire departments are invited to complete a survey defining their current practices in fire and injury prevention education. The survey is a provincial study being conducted by the Alberta Fire & Injury Prevention Educators' Network (FIPEN) with co-operation from the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) and the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR).



The FIPEN steering committee includes representatives from the Alberta fire service, the FCO, Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, the Alberta Firefighters Association and the ACICR. FIPEN's vision is to establish a network of fire and injury prevention educators throughout the province. The steering committee is a recognized resource to the Fire Services Advisory Committee, a ministerial committee that is developing a new vision for the Alberta fire service.

The information requested in the survey is unique and not available from other sources. The intent of the survey is to capture a snapshot of all prevention programming offered throughout Alberta with a view to assessing the current status and exploring ways to enhance the delivery of safety education in the province.

Objectives of the Survey:

- To assess the current practices in fire and injury prevention education within the Alberta fire service.
- To assess the public fire and life safety education needs of fire departments in Alberta, by determining satisfaction with the current public fire and injury prevention programs/resources available to fire departments
- To identify 'gaps' in terms of public education materials/resources required and other public fire and life safety education issues identified by fire departments.

Confidentiality

Individual data pertaining to any specific fire department will not be published and will be treated as strictly confidential. Information will be reported in aggregate form only, and no individuals or fire departments will be identified.

Questions

Any questions about the survey or the research in general can be directed to the survey co-ordinator Ken McMullen at (403) 287- 4246 (dial toll-free: 310-0000).

Submitting

Please complete and submit this survey within one-month of receipt.

- online by visiting the following website: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm; and click on "Educators' Network" link on the left-hand side and open "FIPEN Survey," to access the survey.
- by fax to: (780) 427-5898
- by mail to: FIPEN Survey c/o
  Fire Commissioner's Office
  16th Floor, Commerce Place
  10155 - 102 Street
  Edmonton, AB T5K 4L4.

FIPEN: Vision and mission

FIPEN's vision is to make Alberta the safest place to live. It's mission is three-fold:

- Contribute to a reduction in the frequency and severity of fires and injuries in Alberta.
- Make fire and injury prevention education a priority for the Alberta fire/emergency services.
- Recognize and reduce gaps in fire and injury prevention education.

To accomplish these goals, seven strategic goals have been identified, including:

- Establishing and maintaining a Fire & Injury Prevention Educators' Network of Alberta.
- Expanding active participation from other stakeholder groups.
- Guiding the development of consistent fire and injury prevention education.
- Recognizing current leading practices.
- Co-ordinating training to create competent fire and injury prevention educators.
- Securing sustainable funding.
- Becoming recognized as a resource to the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

Planning ahead for potential pandemic

In the past several months and years, there has been much talk about the possibility of a pandemic influenza reaching North America. To find out what the Government of Alberta (GOA) is doing in preparation for such an event, the following article is based on information provided by Doug Forge, Emergency Management Officer, Consequence Management with Emergency Management Alberta.

Pandemic Influenza occurs when a influenza virus strain has the ability to efficiently spread in human populations and cause significant disease and death. In general, medical evidence suggests there will be three to four influenza pandemics per century. During the 20th century there were three: the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919, the Asian Flu of 1957 and the Hong Kong Flu of 1968. At present, the medical world knows that another influenza pandemic is inevitable, that the timing and epidemiology will be unpredictable, there will be a short lead time from confirmation to its arrival in Canada (its arrival in Canada is expected within less than three months after discovery) and that outbreaks will occur simultaneously in multiple locations and in multiple waves.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is closely monitoring Avian Influenza or H5N1, as it is exhibiting characteristics of being capable of mutating into a pandemic influenza. Of the five conditions required to be considered a pandemic virus, H5N1 has met four of these. The four conditions are a susceptible human population, a novel virus (that is: a virus that has never previously infected humans), a virus infectious for humans and a virus which is highly pathogenic. It is only the last characteristic, efficient human-to-human transmission, which H5N1 has not developed.

The GOA pandemic preparedness strategy is based on both a health and an operations response. Overall, Alberta Health and Wellness is the lead agency with Emergency Management Alberta co-ordinating GOA support to Alberta Health and Wellness and the government as a whole. More specifically, Alberta Health and Wellness concentrates on the health response and Emergency Management Alberta co-ordinates the operations response, supporting Health and Wellness and ensuring the maintenance of GOA essential services.

The health response is based upon planning begun at the World Health Organization level and progressing down through the Public Health Agency of Canada, to Health and Wellness and to the local level involving the Regional Health Authorities and municipalities. Health and Wellness produced their first draft plan, the Alberta Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan, in 2002. They will introduce their second operational plan this year.

The second part of the GOA response is contained in the Draft Alberta Pandemic Influenza Operations Plan. It looks at cross-ministry operations to support Alberta Health and Wellness, while maintaining essential government services throughout the pandemic. It is expected that this plan will evolve in the coming months to include interaction with both private industry and provincial municipalities.

For more information, please contact Doug Forge at Emergency Management Alberta at (780) 422-0349.

Candid snapshot of pandemic preparations

While no one can totally prevent a pandemic, planning a co-ordinated effort goes a long way in terms of being able to deal with such an event. Provided below is a quick overview of key measures that the provincial government is taking.

Preparing for:

- A "people disaster in slow motion" – starts as a health emergency and progresses to a state of general emergency.
- Sharp increase in the need for medical care.
- Intense and unrelenting media and public scrutiny and public unrest.
- A slowing of the arrival/lessening of the effect.

Provincial strategy:

- An influenza pandemic begins as a health emergency – depending on the severity of the pandemic, it can turn into a general emergency that has significant impacts on society as a whole.
- A cross-ministry response is required to ensure the Government of Alberta (GOA) and the province are adequately prepared and able to respond to a pandemic.
- Alberta Health and Wellness is the lead agency.
- Emergency Management Alberta provides co-ordination and support.
- Deputy Ministers Pandemic Influenza Committee oversees the GOA's cross-ministry's work.
- Each ministry in the GOA has a role.

Key players:

- Global: the World Health Organization (WHO)
- National: Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).
- Provincial: Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Municipal Affairs.
- Local: municipalities, Regional Health Authorities.

Avoiding safety code inspection traps

Most fire service personnel are fully aware of the Safety Codes Council and the *Alberta Safety Codes Act*, but are you also aware of the pitfalls and how to avoid getting caught in the traps associated with safety code inspections and investigations? If not, the following information will be of interest to you.

The *Alberta Safety Codes Act* is an umbrella legislation that covers nine technical disciplines and provides the administrative tools to enhance safety throughout Alberta. According to Gerry Baron, Administrator of Accreditation and Co-ordinator of Appeals for the Safety Codes Council, within the two components of the fire discipline (inspections and investigations) there is the real possibility of being drawn into the following traps:

Design – often it is easy to simply show the owner what needs to be where, or how to build it to meet code requirements (i.e. amend the floor plan so the layout becomes code compliant). Unfortunately, at this point, the Safety Codes Officer (SCO) has stepped into the role of designer.

Project management – owners (typically in construction) often look to SCOs for direction on how to achieve their goals, who or which contractor to get to the do the job, etc. The caution here is that there is a fine line between consulting on code advice and assuming the role of the project manager for the owner.

Work-arounds – site problems are the problem of the owner or his or her agent (contractor/project manager). SCOs should refrain from offering a solution to meet with the intent of the code and achieve what the owner wishes to accomplish, as this again puts the SCO into the designer/project manager role. Officers may not offer what he or she would accept as being equal to the code requirement (offering an acceptable solution, perhaps not specifically mentioned in the Code). This is a variance, and not part of a SCO's duties. The owner or owner's agent is responsible for meeting the code or, in this instance, offering an alternate solution complete with the research and rationale for the SCO to consider. As Baron points out, "The SCO must always be in the position of making code compliance decisions, not in finding ways to justify a proposal. The SCO must remember that his or her duty is to assess whether what he/she sees meets with the Code, rather than figuring out a way around the Code requirement."

SAFETY CODES COUNCIL

Going beyond authority or level of skill – in working closely with owners and contractors, an SCO should avoid getting drawn into subjects that are not within the scope of the SCO's skills. (e.g., a wall looks good but has the SCO received structural training?)

Inspections out of scope – it is easy for an SCO to get involved in another discipline, such as fire alarms or sprinkler systems, which are in the building discipline. Often, the public (professionals included) makes assumptions that key words such as "fire" (as in fire alarms), "smoke" (as in smoke detector), "sprinkler" (as in sprinkler system) and others belong to the fire discipline when, in fact, they are in the building discipline. In many instances, the fire discipline is a maintenance function that becomes the authority at post-occupancy to ensure that the owner and occupants look after the facility they are in. Communication with the owner/occupant is paramount.

Crew or brigade inspection – The *Alberta Safety Codes Act* stipulates that only SCOs have the authority to provide services under the act (including regulations, codes and standards) and they are provided liability protection, as is the accredited organization under the act. Individuals who are not SCOs have no protection under the act and should be considered as attracting liability to both themselves and their employer (with the exception that an SCO may take anyone with him/her to assist).

Investigations without permission – fire investigations related to dwellings that are in use as dwellings require the consent of the owner/occupant or a warrant. Often, through natural progression of the emergency call, work continues without thought to the individual's rights.

While it's easy to imagine that you are being helpful, it is also easy to fall into these traps, said Baron. "The best way to avoid these traps is to stay focused, remember why you are there and what the goal is. Remember that their problems are not your problems. They are owned by someone else." Baron also cautions the importance of knowing your limits and working within them. "Inspections are a report on how the thing measures up against the code. By upholding your professionalism and respecting everyone's rights, you will be able to do your job effectively and avoid being drawn into these traps."

The best way to avoid these traps is to stay focused, remember why you are there and what the goal is.

For more information about this topic, please contact Gerry Baron, Administrator of Accreditation and Co-ordinator of Appeals, Safety Codes Council at 1-888-413-0099 or (780) 413-6043.

Digest

Check it out

If you haven't visited the FCO website lately, put it on your "to do" list. It contains a wealth of information including new tip sheets, information about current fire prevention campaigns and links to the Fire Services Advisory Committee. Also included is a new Occupational Health and Safety section. Bookmark the following website and return to it often: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm

FYI...

The Canadian Emergency Management College (Ottawa) now has its Awareness and Basic level CBRN courses online. Each course takes about half a day to go through and provides first responders with the knowledge necessary to identify a CBRN or possible CBRN incident.

The path to the courses is: http://cbrnonline.psepc.gc.ca/index_e.html

Minburn celebrates new acquisition

The Innisfree Fire Department's open house on May 27, 2006, provided the perfect opportunity to showcase the County of Minburn's newest vehicle – a 2006 Ford F550 4X4 crew cab utilizing a 6.0 litre, turbo-charged diesel. Built by Hub Fire Engines, it includes a CET skid unit with a rear-mounted 18 horsepower Honda pump. The truck carries 350 imperial gallons of water with a 20-gallon foam tank.

The truck was purchased with the aid of a municipal sponsorship grant submitted by the County of Minburn in partnership with the Village of Innisfree and the Village of Minburn, and was delivered to Innisfree Fire Chief Arnold Usenik in April 2006.

Ghost River celebrates new hall

The MD of Bighorn celebrated the grand opening of the new Ghost River fire hall on June 24, 2006. The new hall includes a number of environmental features to keep costs low. It also includes two very long bays that are large enough to hold four pieces of equipment. Fire Chief Tom McFadden, together with his wife Elaine, were instrumental in having the original fire hall replaced. Tom, Elaine and the 10 other firefighters at the hall all dedicated considerable time to finish the hall's interior. Among attendees at the celebratory opening was Janis Tarchuk, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

FERS

milenet, including the FERS and AERIS applications, is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Customer support will only be available during regular office hours.

It is expected that insurance agencies will also begin to use FERS to report fires electronically.

Get involved

Besides reading *Alberta Fire News*, we're encouraging readers to get more involved by letting us know what questions you have for our regular "You Were Asking" column. You don't need to have the answer, just the questions. We'll get our two resident experts, Ray and Ray, to provide the answers.

We're also looking for information about what is happening in fire departments across the province.

New equipment, programs, ideas or ways of doing things? Let us know so we can share the information with other fire departments. Send your ideas, questions and information to Te-Jay Thompson at (780) 644-4692, or e-mail: te-jay.thompson@gov.ab.ca

Alberta fire service activities calendar – Fall 2006

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	FOR MORE INFORMATION
Getting To Know Fire Workshop	Sep. 12	Edmonton	Contact Te-Jay Thompson: (780) 644-4692
Fire Prevention Week Campaign	Oct. 8-14	Province-wide	Kit on FCO website September 1
Southern Alberta Firefighter's Conference	Oct. 20-21	Lethbridge Lodge	Contact Kevan Jess: (403) 381-5483
Fire Service Exemplary Service Medal Presentation	Oct. 23	Royal Alberta Museum, Edm.	Contact Neelu Jairath: (780) 415-0502
Change your Clock, Change your Smoke Alarm Battery Campaign	Oct. 29	Province-wide	Information bulletin on FCO website Oct. 25
Getting To Know Fire Workshop	Nov. 6	Fort McMurray	Contact Te-Jay Thompson: (780) 644-4692
FCO Fire Chiefs Meeting	Nov. (date TBA)	Edmonton	See FCO website
Holiday Safety Campaign	Dec. 15-31	Province-wide	Kit on FCO website December 1

Digest continued...

In memoriam

It is with much regret that we announce the deaths of the following members of the fire service in the past few months.

- Jim McCormack died April 24, 2006, after a lengthy illness.
- Donald Lyle Bush passed away May 13, 2006, at the age of 73 years. Donald served as a Fire Inspector for the Provincial Fire Commissioner's Office for 15 years, and was a volunteer fireman and former Fire Chief of the Claresholm Fire Department.
- Brian Monahan, who passed away on May 21, 2006, at the age of 57, was an active volunteer member of the Millet Fire Department for more than 40 years. He also served as the Municipal Secretary of the Town of Millet and was a Safety Codes Officer in Leduc County, and the County of Wetaskiwin.
- M.D. (Dixie) Shuttleworth passed away on June 12, 2006. He joined the Fire Commissioner's Office as an Inspector for the Peace River area in the mid-1950s, then moved to Edmonton as the Supervisor of the Inspection Section. Prior to retiring in the mid 1980s, he was promoted to Deputy Fire Commissioner.
- Darcy Moses, age 20, from Sturgeon Lake, died on July 2, 2006, due to a helicopter accident in the line of duty. He worked for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in the Smokey Wildfire Management area.
- Dave Naar, age 35, from Niagara Falls, Ontario, a pilot for Remote Helicopters, died on July 11, 2006 when his helicopter crashed into the shoreline while scooping water from a lake abut 100 kilometres northeast of Wabasca.

You were asking...?

Q&As about Alberta's Safety Codes

Ray Ligenza and Ray Cox

Questions about Alberta's Safety Codes?

If you have questions about Alberta's Safety Codes, contact Ray Cox or Ray Ligenza at 1-866-421-6929. Ray and Ray are technical advisors for Technical Services, Building and Fire Safety in the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Q. What are the certification requirements for self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in Alberta?

A. The Occupational Health and Safety Code (Section 246) requires an employer to ensure that self-contained breathing apparatus is approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). This requirement applies to fire departments as well.

Not only does the equipment have to meet the NIOSH certification on purchase, the certification must be maintained over the life of the equipment. This means following the manufacturer's maintenance and repair instructions. The SCBA's NIOSH certification may depend on having the equipment serviced by recognized repair centres. If so, only those service centres certified by the manufacturer may be used. Contact the manufacturer for a listing.

There is no legislation mandating a fire department to follow NFPA standards, although they may be adopted by a fire department as internal standards.

Q. How does a fire department ensure that its SCBA is NIOSH certified and that its certification is being maintained?

A. A fire department should make sure that it is purchasing SCBA from recognized dealers. If you are unsure, a quick call to the manufacturer's representative will clarify whether the seller is recognized by the manufacturer, and if they are authorized to repair and service this equipment.

If you are purchasing used equipment, great care must be taken to review maintenance and service records to ensure the manufacturer's repair and service program has been followed and that you are getting equipment that is safe for your firefighters to use.

If you are purchasing used equipment through a dealer, make sure that the equipment has been serviced and checked over by a manufacturer's approved service centre. Again, a quick phone call to the manufacturer's representative will assist you in determining this.

Please forward any questions you may have for "You Were Asking...?" to te-jay.thompson@gov.ab.ca You don't need to have the answer, just the questions. We'll get our two resident experts, Ray and Ray, to provide the answers.

Alberta Fire News is published three times a year by the Fire Commissioner's Office of Alberta Municipal Affairs for the information of the fire service and others with an interest in fire protection. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Alberta Municipal Affairs or the Government of Alberta. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged. The contents of *Alberta Fire News* may be reproduced with the appropriate credit to the source. The editorial office of *Alberta Fire News* is located at:

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Northwest Fire Conference provides interesting twist

Creating a magical approach to getting the message out

If you're looking for a new approach to fire prevention messaging, consider magic. That's exactly what the Peace Region Fire Chiefs did. As a precursor to the 11th Annual Northwest Fire Conference, which took place in early April in Peace River, a day of fire prevention activities were held for area schools. In keeping with the conference theme of "Magic for Fire Prevention," magician and comedian Clinton W. Gray demonstrated to fire service personnel how they can use magic to convey messages about fire prevention. Through sponsorship from SIID consulting, presentations were made to students from all Peace River and area schools. In addition, Les Mroz, President of the Peace Regional Fire Chiefs, contacted the Peace River MacDonald's for gift certificates for all students participating in the presentations. The certificates, together with fire prevention material from the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office, the Grande Prairie and District Burn Society, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and various area fire departments, were put into packages for each student to receive after the presentations.

Magician Clinton W. Gray demonstrates how to use magic in conveying messages about fire prevention to fire service personnel at the Northwest Fire Conference.

"The school presentations were a huge success," said Gregg Littleton, Fire Chief for the County of Grande Prairie. "As a result of this initiative, over 1,400 students participated and received fire prevention materials and messages."

Following the school presentations, Gray visited the exhibit hall of the conference, mystifying and entertaining conference delegates and trade members. Gray's seminar at the conference, entitled "Magic for Fire Prevention," was a huge success. In addition to teaching the more than 100 participants some of the tricks of his trade, Gray also facilitated the purchase of needed materials to do the illusions he demonstrated.

"Everyone who attended the session left with new tools to bring fire prevention to their communities," said Littleton.

Gray also put on a show for the public to help raise funds for three Peace River area charities. The show raised $1,500 that was shared among the Peace River Salvation Army, the Firefighters Burn Treatment Unit and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. He also performed during the Weberville Fire Department's pancake breakfast the following day.

"Thanks to the support provided by SIID Consulting, fire prevention was a truly magical educational opportunity in the Peace River area," said Darlynn Wolfe, Secretary Treasurer for the Northwest Fire Conference.

For more information about magician/comedian, Clinton W. Gray, please visit www.siid.ca

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